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Summary record of the 245th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 6 April 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Cisternas Reyes

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 (*continued*)

Initial report of Serbia (continued) (CRPD/C/SRB/1; CRPD/C/SRB/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Serbia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Prijic** (Serbia) said that persons with disabilities were legally permitted to use all forms of public transportation, including with a guide dog. All air transport companies were also legally required to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to travel without paying any extra charges. Guide dogs were permitted in airports and on aircraft by law.

3. **Ms. Kotevic** (Serbia) said that the allowance provided to a family fostering a child with disabilities was 29,000 dinars for a child with a minor disability and 36,000 for a child with a more severe disability or multiple disabilities, while the sum paid to families fostering a child who did not have a disability was 23,000 dinars. The number of children with disabilities under the age of 18 in social welfare institutions, which currently stood at 474, had decreased steadily from year to year, while the number of those over 18 years of age had not increased.

4. The sum of 132 million dinars, which had been allocated for the operational expenses of such institutions in 2014, was far less than the 400 million dinars earmarked for social protection services at the local level and the 700 million dinars for services provided by non-State institutions at the local level. In addition, around 106.5 million dinars were earmarked for parents who were not entitled to pensions under the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance but qualified for benefits under the Law on Social Protection if they had been caring for a child with disabilities for 15 years or more. A further 96 million dinars had been earmarked for payment of the attendance allowance for assistance and care by another person. It was important to note that no new social protection institutions had been opened or constructed in Serbia in the previous year.

5. Following the adoption of various legislative amendments and the introduction of the new Family Law, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention, it was hoped that there would be no further cases of complete deprivation of legal capacity. Judicial procedures, following allegations of discrimination from persons with disabilities, were initiated very quickly in practice. Each social protection institution was required to have special protocols in place for prescribing medical treatment.

6. **Ms. Gavrilovic** (Serbia) said that gender equality was a priority issue for the Government. The Coordination Body for Gender Equality had been set up in 2014 and a new law and action plan on gender equality were being drafted, to include specific measures on economic empowerment, health care and combating violence against women. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection worked closely with civil society organizations to provide social protection services and training on issues such as reproductive health. As part of the strategy to be developed in 2016, the Government would focus on combating violence against women, including women with disabilities and women who suffered from multiple discrimination. Serbia was the only country outside the European Union that had adopted and implemented the Gender Equality Index.

7. **Mr. Vukicevic** (Serbia) said that a draft law had been prepared which would provide protection against domestic violence for women with disabilities. Legislation was also planned to improve coordination between the police, prosecutors and the courts in efforts to combat domestic violence. The offences of rape, intercourse with a defenceless

person and intercourse with a child were all covered by the new law. Training in the field of domestic violence was to be provided to students of the Judicial Academy, taking into account the European Convention on Human Rights, the conventions of the United Nations and the European Union *acquis*.

8. **Mr. Andric** (Serbia) said that the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, had prepared a family manual for action in emergency situations. It was planned to publish the manual in Braille. Emergency public shelters in Serbia had been constructed in the 1980s and were in need of adaptation to ensure that they were accessible to persons with disabilities. The necessary modifications would therefore be carried out in the future. A new Law on Emergencies was also being developed and would focus on protecting persons with disabilities in emergency scenarios. The new law would be drafted in close cooperation with civil society organizations representing persons with disabilities.

9. **Ms. Loncar-Kasalica** (Serbia) said that 700,000 migrants had passed through Serbia recently. They had been provided with health-care services, transportation and accommodation and several pregnant women had given birth in the country; those births had been recorded in the relevant registers. The migration process had been dealt with in a fully transparent manner, with the involvement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, civil society and the media. The legislation concerning asylum contained no discriminatory provisions, but none of the applicants for asylum had been persons with disabilities. In 2015 there had been 24 applications for asylum while 10 applications had thus far been received in 2016.

10. **Mr. Cakarevic** (Serbia) said that, in the light of a number of problems identified in psychiatric institutions in 2013, the Ministry of Health had adopted a law on mental health care and a set of regulations which permitted the use of physical restraint, forced hospitalization and isolation only in exceptional cases when there was no other way to prevent an individual from putting their own or a third party's life and safety at risk. The decision to subject an individual to physical restraint, forced hospitalization or isolation was taken by a psychiatrist who was required to justify the medical grounds for the decision in writing. The legal guardian of the individual in question would be automatically notified of such a decision.

11. In the case of someone with mental health difficulties who was admitted to a psychiatric institution without their consent, an urgent examination of the person was required within 24 hours and the relevant court was notified of the decision to detain the person. Within three days of receiving said notification, the court was required to hold a hearing in the detention facility concerned and to give the individual being detained the opportunity to make a statement. With regard to the question that had been asked concerning forcibly administered contraceptive medication, he said that it was not permitted to administer any type of medication whatsoever without consent from the patient or their legal guardian.

12. **Ms. Paunovic** (Serbia) said that sign language interpretation was provided in court proceedings free of charge, in accordance with the relevant legislation. Proceedings could also be conducted in writing, if necessary.

13. **Ms. Simic** (Serbia), in response to Mr. You Liang, said that mainstream schools were required to provide students with disabilities with a physical environment, teaching methods and materials and expert support adapted to their disability as well as an individualized plan of study. She explained that the local interministerial commissions had been established to assess the additional educational, health and support needs of children with disabilities with a view to ensuring as far as possible that they remained in the care of their families, lived in their community and attended the school nearest their home. The

commissions were also responsible for deciding if it was in the best interests of a child to be sent to a special school, if the parents consented.

14. The number of students with disabilities in special schools had dropped by 90 per cent and would no doubt continue to decline. No decision had been taken on what to do with the increasingly empty special schools. They might be converted to prepare children from institutions with severe or multiple disabilities for inclusion in the regular school system, used as resource centres on inclusive education for the mainstream schools or as technical and teaching facilities to prepare teachers for working with children with disabilities.

15. **Mr. Vukicevic** (Serbia), referring to the training of judges, said that the Judicial Academy provided future judges with training in European Union and United Nations human rights norms, including the prevention of discrimination against persons with disabilities. The Academy also offered seminars on special topics for judges, prosecutors and police officials, which likewise dealt with the prevention of discrimination. Training would also be provided on the amendments to the Family Law relating to domestic violence. All judges dealing with minors and persons with disabilities had received specialized training for that purpose. The Ministry of the Interior had a training department for the police that organized workshops on human rights and the treatment of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities.

16. There were no quotas for the participation of persons with disabilities in higher education but he noted that the Faculty of Law, one of the country's most prestigious institutions, was fully accessible; its library provided electronic format and audio textbooks and a reading room with audio reading software for blind or visually impaired students. Students with disabilities were consulted on their needs and were accommodated for examinations, which could be taken in writing or orally and in small groups. Professors followed guidelines on how to make their lectures accessible.

Articles 21-33

17. **Mr. Lovászy** (Country Rapporteur) said that he welcomed the increased funding for disability issues and hoped that that trend would continue. With regard to article 31, he requested information on the number of organizations providing social services, how they were licensed and the number of clients they served as well as on the database on local services mentioned in paragraph 106 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/SRB/Q/1/Add.1).

18. Reverting to article 14, he wondered if any additional safeguards existed to protect the rights of a person with a mental disability given that a decision on involuntary commitment to an institution could be made by one doctor or physician from the institution, who might be biased in his assessment.

19. Turning to article 20, he asked whether provision was made for the use of sign language in driver training for the deaf and whether doctors received training on the criteria for issuing certificates of fitness for drivers with disabilities with a view to ensuring consistency.

20. **Mr. Ruskus**, referring to article 24, noted that fewer than 500 students with disabilities were attending the 18 state or private universities, which would seem to imply that there was no real policy to increase access to higher education for persons with disabilities. He asked whether the State party intended to adopt measures to improve access to higher education and monitor progress made and whether support would be provided in that area to institutions of higher education.

21. Turning to the issue of inclusive education, he said that he had received information that parents were pressured into sending children with disabilities to special schools, teachers had little preparation for dealing with children with disabilities and individualized education plans frequently lacked substance. The State party should provide information on how it intended to change mindsets and promote inclusive education, including the training of teachers in accordance with the New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment A Reality, and Sustainable Development Goal 4, on quality education.

22. **Ms. Kingston** said that she would appreciate more information on the quality and coverage of early screening of children for disabilities, including for hearing impairment, and on the support available for children with a hearing impairment. She also asked if information was provided to parents on sign language and deaf culture in addition to the possibility of a cochlear implant, whether support teachers were trained in sign language and whether there was research into deaf culture. She asked if a comprehensive dictionary for the deaf was being prepared. She wondered if the helplines for women victims of violence were accessible to deaf and blind women.

23. Referring to article 11 and also article 30 (4), she asked whether emergency evacuation procedures were accessible to the deaf. She enquired whether the State party was truly committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the eradication of poverty for persons with disabilities.

24. **Mr. You** Liang, referring to article 29, asked to what extent persons with disabilities were able to access information about parliament and national and local elections and to exercise their right to vote. Turning to article 28, he asked how the State party intended to promote poverty reduction, especially for persons with disabilities, taking into account the Convention, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal 1 to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

25. **Mr. Basharu** said that the State party must do more to increase access to information for the deaf and the blind by increasing the use of Braille, audio texts and sign language. It should also eliminate the use of pejorative terms such as "handicapped" and "dumb" in official documents. Regarding article 29, he wondered why a voting ballot from a person with a disability who was allowed to vote from home was not entrusted to someone chosen by that person, rather than a member of the electoral commission, to be taken to the polling station.

26. **Ms. Quan-Chang** said that more must be done to protect women and children with disabilities in institutions from sexual violence and its consequences. It was not sufficient to prescribe contraceptive measures, even if consent was required from the individual or their representative, especially since generally that representative was a staff member. She requested more information on measures to protect the rights of women and children in institutions.

27. With regard to article 28, she said that she would welcome information on measures aimed at including families with children or older dependents with disabilities in society and the community and ensuring they enjoyed a decent standard of living, in particular with regard to highly vulnerable and marginalized groups, for example the Roma and migrants.

28. Lastly, turning to article 33, she asked to what extent the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms coordinated with persons with disabilities on the implementation of the Convention, whether implementation of the Convention would be strengthened and when an independent monitoring mechanism with the involvement of representatives from civil society organizations would be established.

29. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik, referring to article 27, said that the State party should focus on creating a culture of accommodation and inclusion for the employment of persons with disabilities rather than piecemeal subsidies and benefits, in order to ensure equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. He would welcome more information on the notion of professional rehabilitation and on the work centres mentioned in the report. He wondered whether the work centres were different from "sheltered workshops".

30. Turning to article 28, he stressed that the key to improved quality of life was gainful employment and requested information on the general standard of living of persons with disabilities, for example income relative to the national average, and on the number of persons with disabilities living in poverty.

31. **Ms. Degener** said that she had concerns about medical procedures performed on women with disabilities in institutions, for example insertion of intrauterine devices without anaesthesia, Pap tests and terminations of pregnancy. She asked how many such procedures had been performed since the State party's ratification of the Convention. With regard to the delegation's remarks about turning special education schools into schools to prepare persons with severe or multiple disabilities for inclusion in regular schools, she cautioned that the Committee's experience was that such measures generally failed; the best approach was inclusion from an early age through the provision of suitable accommodation in the regular school system.

32. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** asked whether Braille would be recognized as an official form of writing and whether Braille textbooks would be made available to all students who needed them. She would welcome information on how the State party intended to guarantee the right of a mother with a disability to raise her child at home, including if that child also had a disability. She was concerned at the high number of children with disabilities placed in institutions and asked if there were frequent parental visits and what educational services were provided to deaf and blind children.

33. Recalling the recommendation made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the effect that the State party should take the measures necessary to ensure the full and effective realization of the right of women with disabilities to sexual and reproductive health (CEDAW/C/SRB/CO/2-3, para. 33 (c)), she expressed concern about the lack of adapted health facilities for women with disabilities, for example for mammograms and obstetric care. The State party had signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and she requested information on steps taken to support women victims of violence, especially women with disabilities.

34. **Mr. Buntan** said that the delegation should provide information about the levels of funding for special education and for making mainstream schools inclusive, as well as about measures to increase accessibility and accommodation in regular schools so that persons with disabilities could develop their full potential. He wondered whether the State party was committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and whether it intended to ratify and implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

35. **The Chair**, referring to article 28, asked what measures the State party had adopted to implement the recommendation of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to increase social assistance benefits for persons with disabilities in the context of poverty reduction measures for vulnerable groups.

36. Turning to article 26, she requested information on what proportion of persons with disabilities had access to full rehabilitation services.

37. Lastly, by way of follow-up to article 14, she said that she would welcome further information on procedures relating to assessments of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and in particular on safeguards in that area.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

38. **Ms. Kotevic** (Serbia) said that, under the Law on Social Protection, the licensing procedure for bodies providing disability-related services would be completed in May 2015. All applications for licences were considered by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs. A number of licences had been issued to service providers, including two in the field of personal assistance for children, 12 relating to day-care centres for children and youth with physical and intellectual impairments, 2 for supportive housing and 23 regarding home care and assistance.

39. There were currently 21 State-funded day-care centres operated by organizations of persons with disabilities. Those centres served 220 children with disabilities and employed 110 staff members. In 2015, the centres had received more than 18 million dinars in government funding. Personal assistance was provided to 90 persons with disabilities by 15 professionals employed by organizations of persons with disabilities, which had received over 3.5 million dinars in government funding for that purpose. Respite services were provided by 45 professionals to 150 children with disabilities and had attracted over 7.5 million dinars in government funding in 2015. Pedagogical support, legal aid telephone helplines and tele-assistance were provided by organizations of blind persons and multiple sclerosis patients. Around 13,000 deaf persons and persons with hearing impairments had benefited from Government-funded sign language interpretation services. Public information requests could be filed via e-mail or by post. Blind persons could be provided with free reader software to allow them to access public information. In the light of the adoption of the Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and the ratification of the Convention, efforts were being made to ensure that all legislation and documents relating to persons with disabilities were drafted using terminology consistent with the Convention and to raise awareness of the issue among journalists. Under the Law on Social Protection, a protocol had been introduced on the conduct of staff in social protection institutions which specifically prohibited the use of all forms of violence and exploitation against residents.

40. As a result of planned amendments to the Family Law and legislation on civil proceedings, judges would be required to determine in which cases persons with disabilities required a legal guardian. In total, 477 children with disabilities, many of whom had multiple developmental impairments, were currently living in social care institutions. A majority of the parents concerned had placed their children in an institution because they could not meet their health-care needs. Other reasons for placing children in an institution included absence of or inadequate parental care. In September 2015, 30 per cent of a total of 6,000 foster carers had been special foster carers. The number of children in institutions had been reduced dramatically. In the future, the Government would focus on independent living, supportive housing and small residential communities, rather than on large-scale institutions.

41. **Ms. Prijic** (Serbia) said that, in 2011, questions on disability had been included in the national population census questionnaires for the first time; however, the data obtained on persons with disabilities had not been sufficiently precise. Work was ongoing to prepare mandatory questions on disability for inclusion in the next census questionnaire. Census officials would be trained how to ask such questions and process the answers. The National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia was cooperating in efforts to develop a database containing information on persons with disabilities disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability, employment status, education and income, among other things. To date, the details of more than 40,000 persons with disabilities had been entered into the database.

There were 33 federations of organizations of persons with disabilities and 530 such organizations in Serbia.

42. A sign language dictionary had been published in 2003, and an amended version had been released in 2015. Work was currently ongoing to develop a sign language and deaf culture studies programme and sign language classes had been run for the past 14 years. The Council for Persons with Disabilities was examining the issue of the standardization of sign language, drawing on contributions from persons with disabilities, government officials and experts in the field in question. To date, more than 300 persons, including officials working in the employment, education, social service and health-care sectors, had learned basic sign language. Televised parliamentary debates and news programmes were increasingly accompanied by sign language interpretation. A law on the use of Serbian Sign Language had recently been adopted. Text messages and e-mails could be sent by persons with disabilities requiring urgent assistance and work was ongoing to set up a telecentre to deal with the needs of deaf persons.

43. The NGO network Out of Circle provided assistance to women with disabilities who were victims of violence and had equipment enabling it to receive messages sent by blind persons. Work-capacity assessments were carried out in line with the World Health Organization International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. In cases where a person with disabilities was deemed fit for employment under general conditions, no adaptation was required in terms of the job in question. In cases of employment under special conditions, provision was made for reasonable adaptation of the workplace or the job concerned, or in certain cases, both. Persons with disabilities could access job-specific training and attend classes in communication and entrepreneurship, job-clubs and employment fairs. Employers recruiting persons with disabilities enjoyed financial benefits, while the recruits themselves received allowances and financial incentives had been put in place to encourage persons with disabilities to become self-employed. In 2015, 750 million dinars had been allocated to vocational retraining and 500 million dinars had been spent on active employment policy.

44. A number of special measures relating to the adaptation of jobs and workplaces were outlined in paragraph 312 of the State party report. Companies for professional rehabilitation focused on a variety of professions; at least 50 per cent of their employees were persons with disabilities and they provided specific vocational retraining. Social companies promoted and supported entrepreneurship among vulnerable population groups and offered social protection services. Steps had also been taken to devise activities for persons with disabilities for whom employment could not be found. As a result of vocational rehabilitation measures, more than 1,500 persons with disabilities had found work within the past year.

45. **Mr. Kotevic** (Serbia) said that persons with mental impairments potentially posing a threat to themselves or to others were assessed by a psychiatrist prior to being placed in a psychiatric institution. The medical staff at the institution in question carried out a second psychiatric assessment within one day of the arrival of the person concerned to decide whether he or she should be released. The courts must be notified of any decision in favour of continued detention within 24 hours of that decision being taken. Judges must maintain an impartial stance and faced disciplinary measures should they fail to do so. When inserting an intrauterine device into any patient, including women with disabilities, doctors must at all times act in an ethical manner. No medical procedure could be carried out without the prior consent of the patient concerned or that of his or her legal guardian. If there had been instances in which abortions and Pap tests had been performed and intrauterine devices inserted without the use of anaesthetic, then those were exceptional cases. The final decision relating to the use of anaesthetic lay with the treating anaesthetist.

Patients who believed that they had suffered as a result of such procedures could file an official complaint.

46. All primary and most secondary and tertiary health-care centres were equipped with access ramps and were accessible to persons with disabilities. Two mobile mammography units had been purchased to allow for breast-cancer screening of women unable to travel to a medical centre. The National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality and its action plan provided for measures on the improvement of the health of women with disabilities and the procurement, in 2016, of gynaecological examination chairs for women with disabilities.

47. Serbia had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The standards being developed for the operation of telephone helplines for victims of violence would take into consideration the needs of women with disabilities, in particular deaf women. Easily accessible shelters had been set up, as required under article 23 of the Council of Europe Convention.

48. **Ms. Loncar-Kasalica** (Serbia) said that Serbian legislation on driving licences was in line with Annex III (Minimum Standards of Physical and Mental Fitness for Driving a Power-Driven Vehicle) of Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on driving licences (Recast). Driver training was available to persons who, following a medical examination, had been issued a certificate attesting to their fitness for driving. Customized vehicles were used for the practical training of persons with physical or sensory impairments. Such persons could also complete the training using their own vehicles. Licences were issued with appropriate restriction codes. Code 04, for example, meant that the licensed driver could not drive a vehicle with a manual gearbox.

49. **Ms. Sinic** (Serbia) said that the Ministry of Education was expected shortly to adopt an action plan on social inclusion. It defined the steps to be taken to improve inclusive education in Serbia. Data to compare the funds earmarked for children with disabilities in mainstream schools and those earmarked for such children in special schools were not available, but as a general rule student-teacher ratios in special education schools were far lower than in mainstream schools, making mainstream education the less costly option. One pending challenge was to ensure that school funding followed any children who transitioned from special to mainstream schools.

50. Many deaf and blind children had been successfully educated in mainstream schools, but they could also attend special schools. As the Law on Textbooks and Other Teaching Materials stipulated that students with disabilities were to be given textbooks tailored to their needs, a set of rules on the methods of tailoring textbooks to the needs of such students was in development. Braille textbooks and terminals were available to students, as were specialized computer programs and a Braille version of the primary school leaving examination. Competitions organized by the Ministry of Education relied on tests that had been translated into Braille.

51. Except for those working in special schools, teachers were not systematically given training in sign language. However, some who taught deaf or blind students had taken it upon themselves to learn sign language or Braille.

52. Measures had been taken to promote preferential university admissions for students with disabilities, for whom 1 per cent of university places were reserved. Support could be sought from the Centre for Students with Disabilities, located in Belgrade, and all necessary accommodations were made for students with disabilities taking university entrance examinations.

53. Although individual education plans were a powerful mechanism for customizing students' educational experiences, teachers had resisted implementing them. Nonetheless, since 2009, considerable work had been done, including in the area of in-service training, to help teachers make inclusive education a reality. University professors were scheduled to receive training in ways of improving initial teacher training in April 2016.

54. **Ms. Milenkovic** (Serbia) said that the methods whereby persons with disabilities could exercise their right to vote were provided for by the Law on the Election of Deputies. Those methods included voting by proxy and marking a ballot at home and having it delivered in a sealed envelope to the polling station by poll workers. According to the rules for the elections called for 24 April 2016, any voters who were unable to mark a ballot could have a person of their choice mark it for them. Instructions on ensuring the accessibility of polling stations to persons with disabilities had been adopted. Braille ballots, however, had not yet been introduced, and there was a shortage of sign language interpreters in the country.

55. **Ms. Stajic-Radivojsa** (Serbia) said that Serbia had been one of the few countries in its region to have taken an active role in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The country's President had acknowledged that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was highly ambitious, and very shortly thereafter a working group had been set up to bring together representatives of all the ministries and public agencies responsible for ensuring progress towards any of the 17 goals, including ending poverty. Another intersectoral working group had been set up to coordinate the efforts made to achieve the goals, make related proposals and produce periodic progress reports.

56. **Mr. Vukičevic** (Serbia) said that persons not accountable for their actions could not be found guilty of criminal offences. Such persons could be committed to a psychiatric facility. After a set period of time, the decision was reviewed. The authorities were aware that the situation was not ideal, however, and efforts were being made to ensure that people were not kept in psychiatric facilities any longer than absolutely necessary.

57. **Ms. Jović** (Office of the Ombudsman, Serbia) said that although Serbia had made efforts to implement the Convention, the situation was not entirely satisfactory, as even the authorities had acknowledged. To enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights and to be included in the community, additional efforts had to be made to ensure that public agencies and NGOs cooperated fully at local, provincial and national levels. Such cooperation would make it possible to make the most effective use of the country's limited resources. Data collection, which was currently insufficient, the development of key indicators and independent monitoring were also critical.

58. **Mr. Janković** (Office of the Ombudsman, Serbia) said that Serbia needed above all to step up efforts to reduce the number of persons with disabilities in large institutions and develop local centres staffed by multidisciplinary specialists. Persons with disabilities and the members of their families could thus be given support in their communities.

59. The changes that needed to be made included repealing the legal provisions that made it possible to keep persons with disabilities in isolation, to bring efforts to provide support to such persons under a single umbrella organization and to develop a set of rules on the treatment of persons in institutions. The Serbian mechanism for the prevention of torture would monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations.

60. **Mr. Lovászy** (Country Rapporteur) said that every nation needed heroes: one outstanding Serbian hero had been the nineteenth-century philologist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, who, despite his reduced mobility and his difficult childhood, had become one of the greatest figures in Serbian culture, and had contributed to improving the way in which persons with disabilities were perceived in that county as well as to a wider understanding of the notion of reasonable accommodation.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.